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29 Sept 71

SECRETARIAT DISSEMINATION

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1. AS WE ALL KNOW FROM PAST EXPERIENCE, VIETNAMESE POLITICAL BALL CAN SOMETIMES TAKE BIZARRE BOUNCES. RISK OF ITS DOING SO ALWAYS INCREASES IN PERIODS OF TENSION WHEN BEHAVIOR OF POLITICAL GAME'S CURRENT MAJOR PLAYERS ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO INFLUENCE OF EMOTION, QUESTIONS OF FACE AND FACTORS ROOTED IN VIETNAMESE PSYCHE THAT TRADUCE THE LOGIC OF WESTERN ANALYSTS. AT THIS WRITING WE SHARE X WHAT WE UNDERSTAND TO BE YOUR BASIC ASSESSMENT, NAMELY THAT FLURRY OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND MINOR DISORDERS MAY WELL OCCUR BETWEEN NOW AND 3 OCTOBER BUT GVN APPEARS TO HAVE SITUATION IN HAND. BARRING MISCHANCE (E.G., A MISHANDLED OR TOO LONG IGNORED DEVELOPMENT THAT BALLOONS OUT OF CONTROL), THE 3 OCTOBER ELECTION SHOULD COME OFF ON SCHEDULE WITH THE NUMBER OF VOTES CAST FOR THIEU COMFORTABLY EXCEEDING THE

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NUMBER OF DEFACED BALLOTS, EMPTY ENVELOPES, ETC.

2. IF THE ABOVE SCENARIO HOLDS, PRESUMABLY THIEU WILL CONSIDER AND DECLARE HIMSELF RE-ELECTED, AT LEAST THAT IS THE WAY ASSESSMENTS ARE RUNNING HERE AND, WE <sup>gather</sup> PRESUME, IN THE STATION AND MISSION AT YOUR END. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OR OBJECTIVE GROUNDS FOR CONTRADICTING THIS READING, BUT THERE ARE TWO NAGGING QUESTIONS ON WHICH YOUR PRIVATE THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS WOULD BE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

3. FIRST, WHAT IS THE RISK, CHANCE, LIKELIHOOD (PICK YOUR TERM) OF THIEU'S OPTING TO BOW OUT, WHATEVER BE THE PERCENTAGE OF YES VOTES HE GARNERS? AS W YOU WELL RECOGNIZE, ANY OF A VARIETY OF MOTIVES (OR COMBINATION THEREOF) COULD SUGGEST SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION TO THIEU INCLUDING, CONCEIVABLY, THE THEORETICAL ATTRACTIONS OF A DE GAULLE TYPE GAMBIT -- THREATEN TO RESIGN, FORCE YOUR CRITICS TO FACE THE CONCRETE ALTERNATIVES AND MAKE THEM URGE OR BEG YOU TO STAY. CRITICALLY ASSESSED,

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THE ESTIMATE HERE THAT IF THE ELECTION IS HELD AND THIEU GETS HIS MAJORITY (AS WILL PROBABLY BE THE CASE) THEN THIEU WILL STAY THE COURSE IS REALLY AN ASSUMPTION, PROBABLY CORRECT BUT AN ASSUMPTION NONETHELESS. IN A COMPLEX POLITICAL SITUATION, UNEXAMINED ASSUMPTIONS CAN GET ANALYSTS INTO TROUBLE.

4. SECOND, IF THIEU BOWS OUT -- FOR ANY REASON -- WHAT THEN, BOTH IN CONSTITUTIONAL TERMS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WITH REFERENCE TO THE OVERALL POLITICAL SITUATION?

5. WE REALIZE THESE ~~XXXXXX~~ QUESTIONS DEAL WITH WHAT CURRENTLY MAY APPEAR AS REMOTE CONTINGENCIES BUT WE WOULD STILL WELCOME YOUR VIEWS TO HELP US ENSURE THAT WE HAVE ALL BETS COVERED.

XX END OF MESSAGE

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George A. Carver,  
SANTA  
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